



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ORANGE COUNTY IMAM ADMITS IMMIGRATION VIOLATIONS, VOLUNTARILY LEAVES U.S.**

LOS ANGELES – An Egyptian national who served as an imam at the Islamic Institute of Orange County departed the United States Monday evening.

Wagdy Mohamed Ghoneim, 53, agreed to leave the country voluntarily rather than face the possibility of a formal removal order from an immigration judge.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents arrested Ghoneim at his Anaheim residence in November and charged him with violating his immigration status. During the ensuing proceedings, Ghoneim admitted to the charges.

Following his arrest, ICE held Ghoneim without bond because of concerns his past speeches and participation in fund raising activities could be supportive of terrorist organizations, including Hamas.

Under the agreement reached with ICE and the immigration courts, Ghoneim departed the United States and traveled to Qatar.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.*